

## Ceremony

*Continued from front page*

Ronald Reagan inspired him to continue with his naval career.

"He made a huge difference in my life," said Symonds. "He made it revered to be part of the military again."

Symonds admitted there was a time in his own life he wasn't sure he was cut out for a career in the Navy.

"I think it's conceivable that if the military continued to be held in the regard it was before (Reagan) took over, I am not sure if I would still be around," he said.

After arriving at the Reagan National Library and Museum, Symonds was battling through fatigue. He had only slept about four hours several nights before leaving the ship for the funeral, and he was battling through a bit of jet lag.

"We have these events come up all the time in the military, where you are going to be somewhere in 24, 36, or 48 hours. It happens all the time and this was just one of those events," Symonds

continued. "This just happens to be one I am never going to forget."

Despite his weary body, Symonds maintained his focus and prepared to meet his obligation.

"There is an absolute responsibility to this type of tasking," Symonds said. "I felt a responsibility to the ship. I felt a responsibility to Mrs. Reagan -- to the family. I felt a responsibility to my hero ... President Ronald Reagan."

As he participated in the rehearsal, Symonds embraced his own role in the late afternoon's ceremony.

"Most of my focus, the entire time, was making sure my part in the event went entirely right," said Symonds.

With Reagan's closest friends and family in attendance, and a nation watching intently as one of their most beloved presidents was finally laid to rest, it was time for Symonds to march toward Mrs. Reagan. With the thoughts and prayers of his crew added to the

decorations on his chest, Symonds took the ensign, turned to Mrs. Reagan and knelt before her.

At that moment he stared into the heartbroken eyes of another American hero and said, "Ma'am this flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation -- as an expression of the honorable and faithful service rendered by your husband."

Mrs. Reagan broke eye

## COMREL

founded May 13, 1906, by Dr. Clarence Tucker, is a non-profit preschool and day care for the community's less fortunate children.

"When I was told the ship was sending out around 100 volunteers, I thought 50 per day. I had no idea and was surprised to see that many each day," said Anita Way, a missionary who has been assisting with the institute for more than 40 years. "It's so wonderful to see this many willing to help."

Sailors from the ship spent the two-day period working on plumbing, electrical wiring, plastering and painting several

contact with Symonds for just a moment as she wiped a tear from her eye.

"I'll never, ever forget it," said Symonds. "I was able to take in the service and marvel at the words her children gave. I thought they were right on the mark. They talked lovingly about their father, and I thought that was a perfect way to end the week."

As Symonds rose above

Mrs. Reagan, he turned and walked back to his seat. He passed the coffin of the late president and rendered a salute to, in his words, the greatest president of his lifetime.

"It was the only thing I would have ever thought to do," he said. "What will be most important to me is that I got to play some small role in our last goodbye to an American hero ... my hero."

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buildings on the grounds of the institute. "It may seem like little things, but it will be the impact of those improvements that stand the test of time," said Chaplain (Lt.) Richard House, Religious Ministries department.

Sailors took a divide and conquer attitude as they formed into five groups. Three groups painted, one did electrical work and one construction. When the plan was devised, the groups took their supplies and went to work.

"I helped to sand, prime and paint two rooms in dire need of some work," said

ABE1 Maurice Thigpen, of Air department. "It was an enormous task."

Children at play in the soccer field stopped to watch some of the Sailor's painting pictures on exterior walls. Before long, they were in protective gear and were helping side-by-side with the Sailors.

"I think it had a profound effect on the school and the community," said Thigpen. "The children were happy to see us and their beautiful smiles could make the coldest heart melt. It was my first time participating in a COMREL project, and it will not be the last."



USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76)

NEWSPAPER NAME WINNERS: AS2 Michael Mack SKSN Christopher Conner DKSA Steven Haywood

June 15, 2004 Vol. 1 Issue 6

## Captain Answers Call, Honors Role Model

By JO2 Paul Symonds  
Staff Writer



AP Photo Nancy Reagan receives the national ensign from Capt. James Symonds, commanding officer USS Ronald Reagan, during interment ceremonies for former President Ronald Reagan at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., Friday.

The United States' 40th President, Ronald Wilson Reagan died June 5. Two days later, Capt. James A. Symonds, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) commanding officer was asked to attend the service and deliver the national ensign to the former first lady, Nancy Reagan.

"My first thought was, how are we going to make this happen?" said Symonds.

After making all the necessary arrangements he was on his way to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, Calif.

"The stars couldn't have aligned any better," said Symonds as a smile crept across his face.

Ronald Reagan was getting ready to make its first foreign port stop in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on the way to its new homeport in San Diego. The ship was scheduled to stay in Rio from Wednesday to Sunday, which allowed Symonds the opportunity to leave his command and answer the call of the president's family.

Symonds was sure his staff could "look after the crew" while in Rio, so he was off to California shortly after the ship dropped anchor.

"Even when we are in port it isn't an insignificant thing for the CO of an aircraft carrier to be gone," Symonds

explained. "I wouldn't have left for any other reason than this significant event."

The honor of participating in the interment ceremony was special for Symonds because he viewed Reagan as a role model. Symonds said he has tried to lead much in the same way Ronald Reagan led the country throughout his presidency.

"I have always felt as though his leadership style was exactly the one I wanted

to emulate because it was never about him; it was always about the team," Symonds added. "One of (Reagan's) favorite sayings was, 'It's amazing how much you can get done when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.' It says everything about his style of leadership."

Throughout his journey to California, Symonds reflected on his duty to present the flag to Mrs.

Reagan. "I thought about that honor ... as I was traveling, and while I was there. Symonds said, "I thought I was carrying the crew with me,"

The opportunity to be a part of the ceremony will always have a special place in Symonds heart. Not only did he proudly serve under his commander in chief as a young pilot, but

Ceremony ... Cont. on page 4

## Reagan Sailors Conduct First COMREL Project

By JO1(AW) Lori Sawyer  
Staff Writer

More than 200 Sailors aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) participated in a community

relations (COMREL) project while the ship was in its first foreign port, Rio de Janeiro.

The two-day COMREL project was the first for the Navy's newest aircraft

carrier and a chance to build a relationship with the People's Central Institute and the Brazilian community. The institute, COMREL ... Cont. on page 4



by JO1(AW) Lori Sawyer SK1 David P. David of Morale, Welfare and Recreation division, paints a children's slide at the People's Central Institute in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during Ronald Reagan's first COMREL project, June 11.

### June 6

Sailor of the Day  
ET2 James Rhodes Jr.



Dept: Combat Systems

What is your job title?  
Radar and IFFF Supervisor  
Where are you from?  
Virginia  
Why did you join the Navy?  
To get out

and see the world  
Your favorite place to visit?

San Antonio or Houston

What is your favorite book?

The Bible  
What did you do before the Navy?  
Worked in a factory

What is your favorite song?  
We Fall Down, but We get up  
Who do you hold responsible for your success?  
My father

What's piece of advice would you pass on to others?  
Do your job to the best of your ability because recognition is far and few between.

### June 7

Sailor of the Day  
SHSN Stephanie Stewart



Dept: Supply  
Job Title:

Quality Assurance Team Member  
Where are you from?  
Bradenton, Fla.  
Why did you join the Navy?  
To travel and money for education.

What did you do before you joined the Navy?  
Waitress and cashier

Your favorite place to visit?

Home

Your favorite movie?  
The Princess Bride  
What is your favorite book?  
The Bible

What is your favorite song?  
Clocks by Coldplay  
What inspires you?  
My best friend Alex

What would you consider your strongest asset?  
I'm a caring person

What's your favorite quote?  
"All things are possible for those who believe."

### June 8

Sailor of the Day  
MM2 (SW/AW) John Cushing



Dept: Reactor  
Job Title: Engineering Laboratory Technician

Where are you from?  
Chicago  
Why did you join the Navy?  
To travel, get paid, advance my education and serve

my country  
What did you do before you joined the Navy?  
College

Your favorite place to visit?

Wrigley Field

Your favorite movie?  
Old School  
What is your favorite song?  
Roses by Outkast

What inspires you?  
Doing my best to be the best I can be  
Who do you hold responsible for your success?  
Lt. Jeff Davis

What's your favorite quote?  
"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you will land among the stars"

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# Main Event: Kobe to Blame

by JO2 Paul Simonds  
Staff Writer

The Los Angeles Lakers have battled all year against adversity. They've overcome Kobe Bryant's legal woes, risen above locker room turmoil and persevered through a vicious Western Conference.

Yet they stand one game away from elimination after Monday's 88-80 loss to the Detroit Pistons in the NBA Finals, and analysts everywhere are leaving the squirrely Lakers for dead.

Who am I to predict the Lakers can come back from

a three games to one deficit? But a part of me refuses to give up on the "Lake Show."

If Bryant doesn't stop playing like garbage this series, the season will be over before the Lakers get back to Los Angeles.

I stayed up late to watch game four, Monday, and was appalled at Bryant's showing. He forced a number of shots, committed silly turnovers and tried to be a one-man show. By the way, he shot 32 percent from the field Monday night. To be great he has to play within the framework of the team.

Kareem Abdul Jabar never complained, actually he never said much of anything, about Ervin "Magic" Johnson. Kevin McHale never complained about Larry Bird. Scottie Pippen never complained about Jordan. Yet ... Bryant is constantly complaining about O'Neal.

It's ridiculous! Bryant needs to realize O'Neal is the true leader on the team. Without O'Neal, Bryant would have exactly zero championship rings. Take Sunday night for instance. O'Neal dropped 36 points

and grabbed 20 boards (fourth time in his NBA Finals career O'Neal scored at least 35 and grabbed at least 20 rebounds). On the other hand, Bryant scored a quiet 20 points, committed a number of silly turnovers and was basically a non-factor.

The bottom line is it takes two guys ... two superstars to win a championship. Bryant needs O'Neal, and he needs to step up. If the Pistons are able to beat the Lakers when Bryant scores 20, he has to score 30 plus for the next three games if he wants his fourth ring.

## CCDG 1 Oversees Unitas Exercises

by JO2 Paul Simonds

Staff Writer

The transition from Naval Station Norfolk, Va., to Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, is much more than an opportunity for Ronald Reagan Sailors to finish up personal qualifications and enjoy the scenic beaches of Rio de Janeiro, it's also the first opportunity for the Navy's newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to flex its muscle.

As Ronald Reagan heads around South America, it will be taking part in training evolutions with South American navies.

Reagan will play a vital role in the upcoming unitas, Silent Force Exercise (SIFOREX) and unitas Amphibious training exercises.

With so much going on in theatre, Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group ONE (CCDG 1) is on hand overseeing the operations.

"We are here as the combat commander, which means we are the forces commander responsible for surface and under-sea warfare," said Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Ellinger, N3 operations officer, Commander Destroyer Squadron Seven.

According to Ellinger, exercising with unitas is a great opportunity for the ship to train as well as help other countries train their respective navies.

USS Thomas S. Gates (CG 51) met up with Ronald Reagan, June 8, and will act as an escort all the way around South America. It will also participate in unitas as well.

"They will be going around with us all the way until Peru," said Ellinger.

Also joining Ronald Reagan along the way are USS Benfold (DDG 65) and USS Camden (AOE 2).

"(In) about mid-June they will meet up together and head south (from San Diego)," said Ellinger. "The Camden will then be our escort all the way back to San Diego."

After Ronald Reagan and Thomas S. Gates complete the scheduled training evolutions, they are scheduled to participate in SIFOREX as well.

Ellinger said, SIFOREX is a U.S. and Peruvian exercise focused on Under Sea Warfare (USW).

Ronald Reagan will be working with a number of Peruvian subs in addition to a pair of Peruvian ships, which are going to become part of the Ronald Reagan Strike Group throughout the exercise.

The Peruvians are getting all of their midshipmen, officers in training and junior ensigns on board their participating ships because it's so unique to work with an aircraft carrier.

"They will be making reports to the watchstanders on Ronald Reagan, and we will also have the opportunity to cross-deck [for training]," Ellinger said. "We will be able to send some of our officers and enlisted (Sailors) to their ships, and they will send some of theirs (here) also."

In addition to working with the Peruvians throughout the SIFOREX exercises, Ronald Reagan Sailors will once again play a key role in unitas during Amphibious exercises, which will take place on the west side of the South American continent.

"While we are participating in SIFOREX, Ronald Reagan is going to be providing close-air support missions for unitas amphibs," Ellinger explained. "We are going to have (service members from) countries all over South America as well as U.S. Marines go through amphibious landings and jungle training."

After all the exercises are completed, Ronald Reagan is scheduled to steam into its new homeport.

In a sense, Ronald Reagan is way ahead of the training curve.

The cruise to San Diego is not a "pleasure cruise." It is an operational cruise, which sets the tone for the remainder of the ship's lifespan.



Commanding Officer  
Capt. James Symonds

Executive Officer  
Capt. Andrés Brugal

Command Master Chief  
CMDM (SW/AW)  
Kathy Hansen

Public Affairs Officer  
Lt. Suzanna Cigna

Assistant Public Affairs Officer  
JOCS (SW)  
Donna Corvin

Managing Editor  
JO1 Shane Montgomery

Editor  
JO2 Shane Tuck

Staff Writers  
JO1 (AW) Lori Sawyer  
JO2 Paul Simonds  
JO3 Robbie Thomas  
AN Heather Beckham

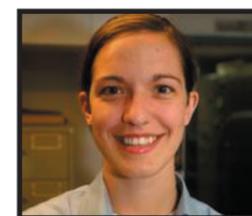
Photographic and printing support is provided by CVN 76 Steel Horse Imaging



This newspaper is an authorized publication for military members on board USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). Contents of The Great Communicator are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the United States Navy.

## Reader's Choice...

### If You Could be any Animal, What Would it be?



**PHAA Kate Gorby**  
"A tiger because they're beautiful, silent and deadly."



**CMDM Kathy Hansen**  
"My little dog Casey because she's spoiled rotten and has a good life."



**YN3 Tony Reyna**  
"I'd be an eagle, so I could fly free."



**ABFAN Ursula Walton**  
"A cheetah because they're the most beautiful animal in the jungle."



**AZ1 Cassandra Glass**  
"A panda because they're sleek, shy, quiet and always get thier prey."

## Reel Time Scrooged

Tonight on Channel 4

by JO2 Paul Simonds  
Staff Writer

There's never a bad time to watch a good Christmas movie -- even if it's in the middle of Summer while steaming around South America.

*Scrooged* is one of my favorite holiday classics. It's right up there with modern day slapsticks such as *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* and *A Christmas Story*.

Though it doesn't get the ink (except for here in *The Great Communicator*), *Scrooged* is flat out hilarious; it is Bill Murray at his comedic best.

The story is an ironic tale of bait and switch. When a callous television executive (Bill Murray) stages the Charles Dickens classic "*A Christmas Carol*," he is confronted by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future.

Murray's portrayal

of Ebenezer Scrooge is terrifically funny, and his one-liners are positively genius.

The ghosts, who are much more "Hollywood" than their Dickens' counterparts, are great. But it's Murray's responses to them that make the movie strong.

The movie features a cameo by Bobcat Goldthwait, who plays the films token Bob Cratchet character (Eliot Loudermilk).

Director Richard Donner was predictable.

Thankfully the writing was strong or this would have been a typical cover of a classic.

If you are interested in a chance to laugh out loud and regain a bit of holiday spirit as we head for San Diego, I highly recommend you take the time to watch this under-appreciated film.

ACTING = A  
DIRECTING = C  
STORYLINE = A  
CAMERA WORK = C  
OVERALL = B

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Reading the June 8 edition of "The Great Communicator," I was impressed with the quality of work that was put into the articles and tributes to President Ronald Reagan. The insert "His Life" was especially nice. All the

articles by your staff were very well written, and I enjoyed reading them very much.

Then I got to the New York Times insert. I reached the "opinion" page where I was disgusted to find an article disrespecting and insulting President Ronald Reagan. This article, by Paul Krugman, started with, "Over the course of this week we'll be hearing a lot about Ronald Reagan, much of it false." I myself heard a lot of great things about President Ronald Reagan this week.

I just read an entire insert in my ship's newspaper relating his accomplishments that strengthened our nation. Is Mr. Krugman inferring all this is "false?"

You have a fine paper without adding the New York Times insert. Why don't we just get our news from Direct to Sailor TV, and I'll come up with my own opinions.

I don't care to read some partisan columnist telling me what a bad Commander in Chief I had. I would rather not hear how all the great

things I know about the man my ship was named after are "false."

When the Times insert asked for our Secretary of Defense to resign, I kept quiet. When the Times insert continually slandered our Commander in Chief, I let it go. Now they have insulted our namesake, President Ronald Reagan, while the flag is still at half-mast. What does it take for us to realize this insert does not rate being part of "The Great Communicator?"

Dear Fed Up,

Thank you for the compliment on our paper. The staff works really hard to make it a product everyone can be proud of.

To answer your question, despite the stance the New York Times insert takes on political views, we can not censor those opinions.

It would be hypocritical for us to remove the insert because we don't like their views and then say we fight to defend all American rights, including free speech.

My best advice is to skip the opinion page for sports, or better yet, send a letter to the Times expressing your feelings because you have the right to do it! thanks again for your letter and keep 'em coming!

-- Editor

## Today's Movies

### Channel 2

Pretty Women  
American Pie 2  
Rock Star  
Zoolander  
K-PAX  
Terminator  
Porky's  
Vanilla Sky

### Channel 4

The Time Machine  
Panic Room  
Roadhouse  
Joy Ride  
Fright Night  
Scrooged  
 Fargo  
Ballistic: Ecks vs Sever

## Spanish Lessons...

"Esta muy caro"

"It's too expensive"